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ABSTRACT

Cues signal something that is about to happen; "self-cues" connote and denote the whole amalgamation of thinking-feeling-speaking-acting and attitude-ideal-priority-value. According to D. J. Bem's gender schema theory (1) a child has an innate cognitive process and has his/her own strategy to self-categorize himself/herself as male or female; and (2) he/she also learns by observing models and strives for that which his/her sociocultural context happens to deem desirable. The path for those concerned with education is to take up the responsibility of spinning the webs of language, not only those that narrate the male's self-cues, but also those that narrate the female's own indigenous, feminine self-cues: caring and nurturing. When teachers interact with students, they must center on the student and take pleasure in altruistic giving. This manner of giving social perception makes a difference in the student's learning environment. (NKA)

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SIDE BY SIDE PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY

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I would like two questions to guide our discussion today: 1) Have we consciously set examples and taught <u>also</u> **female potentials**? 2) If we have, what is the technique? And has it been organized to the extend that we can teach the technique?

It was said that in the beginning of western civilization, **mythology** was used to define, guide, and control the people's thinking-feeling-speaking-acting as well as their attitude-ideal-priority-value. To be succinct, this paper will hereafter use **self-cues**(I host a weekly lifelong learning television show, and we use "cues," to signal something to proximately happen) to connote and denote the whole amalgamation of "thinking-feeling-speaking-acting and attitude-ideal-priority-value," for "self-cues" connote both the essential self "to happen" or "already happened."

In ancient Greek civilization, the gods' and goddesses' self-cues set a model for the humans and their concerns, "not readily available in another common language"(Houser, 1980), and functioned as part of "contemporary sociology and psychology"(Kastner, 1989). Until this present time, their residues are still heavily upon us(Johnson 1989, 1989, 1983).

Kastner argued that as long as the gods and goddesses, as classical subject-matter reflected in paintings and art objects, hang on walls or fill the halls of famous museums, thus transmitting "subliminal messages of a male-dominated culture," we permit to continue the promotion of "separate sphere"(of the sexes) doctrine: "the men's power is active, progressive... He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer..." He pointed out that such doctrines confirmed male superiority.

To be "active, progressive... the doer, the creator, the discoverer...," are these <u>not</u> the very personality attributes we set examples and facilitate for our students(males and females) to become? But "when women enter positions of power... [they] tend to behave like the father of their people rather than the mother or sister"(Boulding, 1976); they thus reinforce the dominating patriarchal values, and when we measure such as progress, we would end up losing the unique **female potentials** to effect a different kind of change(Boulding, 1976), e.g., to develop a more **caring and nurturing environment**. As I worked on it, I discovered that self-cues and potentials are the same thing. Potentials refer to *future* self-cues-- the only difference lies in time(future versus present or past).

Since the fountainhead of self-cues is nested in self-perception, I now lead you into the exploration of **self-perception**.

Social psychologists suggested that A) Self-perception of the Individual depends on the particular object(the personal "self" or his or her own motivation), situation, context(Ross & Fletcher, 1985), and B) To the extent the individual's self-perception is ambiguous or uninterpretable, the perception of others(outside observers) becomes the resource from which the individual would draw. Thus, self-perception is a combination of an individual's self-perception and **social perception**, i.e., the perception the individual draw from others(Bem, 1972).

Exploring the idea on item A) above, I now attend to Bem's Gender Schema theory(1985): a) a child has an innate cognitive process, and has his or her own strategy to self-categorize himself or herself as male or female(as in Cognitive-Learning theory), and b) he or she also learns by observing "models" and strives for that which his or her sociocultural context happens to deem desirable(as in Social Learning theory).

Among the many studies testing Gender Schema theory, I use the following three to relate the points of **caring and nurturing**.

In the first study, each subject was left with a 5-month-old baby for 10 minutes; subjects were led to believe that the researchers were to measure the baby's reaction to strangers, but they actually measured how much the subject smiled at, talked to, kissed or nuzzled, or played with the baby, i.e., patting, tickling, touching.

In the second study, each subject was left with a recently transferred, lonely student(played by an experimental assistant). Experimenters measured the subject's responsiveness to this student.

In the third study, experimenters measured the subject's independent judgment. They measured the subject's response when he or she was the last one to be called upon after the "agreed norm" had been expressed by the group(who were experimental assistants, unknown to the subject).

Before I focus onto the results of the three studies, let me remark that if I don't share with you the specific **feminine** and **masculine** characteristics, it is because Dr. Bem recently advised me that Consulting Psychologists Press(1-800-624-1765), who now owns the copyright to Bem's Sex Role Inventory, prefers that we do not routinely reprint the items(characteristics) in books and/or articles.

I now focus upon the results of the above studies: a) "Feminine"

subjects were high in nurturance, b) "Masculine" subjects were high in independence, and c) **"Androgynous"** subjects, free from gender stereotypes, showed high levels of both independence and nurturance.

Bem reported that androgynous individuals scored highly on virtually all indices of mental health and that such results "compel us to conclude" that it was masculine attributes of the individual that scored highly on the indices of mental health. Thus, conventional mental-health assumptions that require masculinity in men and femininity in women are to be challenged. As a matter of fact, a more recent study reported that people who are effectively functioning are **both males and females** who ranked also highest in the four individuation personality attributes, i.e., (a) personal identity; (b) self-actualization; (c) an internal locus of control, and (d) principled moral reasoning.

> "There was no support for the position that genders are healthiest if they express rigid dichotomous sets of characteristics, perspectives, and behaviors"(Archer & Waterman, 1988).

Let's continue to take pride in the **male self-cues**, but let's be able to(in order to succeed **"side by side")** elevate the **female self-cues**, and truely cultivate the merit and practicality of androgynous self-cues. **Androgynous self-cues** are prompted by creativity, intelligence, and flexibility, they fit well with the existential philosophy, which is the crux of adult education; they fit well with postmodern era, within which we are now living and sharing

> "... a teeming world of provisional possibilities... for one may identify oneself as American in one situation, Irish in another, and a mixture of nationalities in still others. One may be feminine for certain friends, masculine for others, and androgynous for still others"(Gergen, 1991).

Phenomenology puts forth the observation that there is a distinguished difference between the **physical** body(that which has served in scientific investigation, i.e., medical science) and the **lived/**

experienced body(Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). My observation is that history has emphasized disproportionately the female's physical body and the male's lived/experienced body; not until we start to teach the language of lived/experienced body to the females, we don't have **thus the educated females. To be educated is to self-cue in the language of the lived/experienced body**-- the language of empowerments: "active, progressive... the doer, the creator, the discoverer"(traditionally the narration of male potentials). You will soon see that the power in **language** is the power that pivots self-perception and self-cues. It is precisely that

> "Human beings... are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language..."(Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, cited in Doi, 1985).

And moreover,

> "Our... self-definition is not spinning webs or building dams, but telling stories, and more particularly concocting and controlling the stories we tell others — and ourselves — about who we are. And just as spiders don't have to think, consciously and deliberately, about how to spin their webs, and just as beavers, unlike professional human engineers, do not consciously and deliberately plan the structures they build, we (unlike *professional* human storytellers) do not consciously and deliberately figure out what narratives to tell and how to tell them. Our tales are spun, but for the most part we don't spin them; they spin us. Our human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is their product, not their source(Dennett, 1991).

The right path for us all in the concerns of education is to take up the **responsibility of spinning the webs of language**, not only those

that narrate the male's self-cues, but also those that narrate the female's own indigenous, feminine self-cues: that of caring and nurturing, i.e., their potentials to reproduce another human life within them, to nurse their newborn, to enjoy pleasure given uniquely to their female bodies, and not the least, to care and nurture their "selves" and the young and the others around them. Let each of us have the skill of bilingual self-cues.

Working side by side professionally and personally with each other, we communicate in self-cues qua language, and thus transmit our **social perception**(to the extent the individual's self-perception is ambiguous or uninterpretable, the perception of others becomes the resource from which the individual would draw). Through this mechanism, we either empower or diminish one another. Let's empower one another! In the role of "outside observer," we give our students some social perceptions, both when they ask for them and when they do not ask for them; thus we are in the role to give kind words(for kind words breed courage).

In communication, one of the most salient characteristics is that a person either puts himself or herself first at a given moment or he or she puts the other first at a given moment. Putting oneself first is being in the mode of **autocentricity**(fr. Greek, *auto* means self); putting the other person first is being in the mode of **allocentricity**(fr. Greek, *allos* means other), and under this assumption, interaction is perceived as involving some sort of contest, but we can look towards in the direction of

> "... a completely different psychological domain: a domain of care and nurturing rather than power and control... It is this ability to put oneself in the place of the other, to treat him or her as more important than oneself, and to experience his or her pleasures and pains vicariously, at least for a perieod of time, which makes human interaction so particularly human"(Apter 1989).

The self-cues in this mentioned psychological domain emphasize **giving and being given** rather than taking or giving up:

In the mode of autocentricity, which centers on oneself, pleasure comes from **"being given"** material things, time, attention, help, other's self, concern. In **mastery** mode, pleasure comes from "**being master**"

over an object, person, skill, time, motivation, or situation(Apter, 1989). It is easy to understand that people seek the pleasure from the combination of autocentricity and mastery modes.

But the pleasure of the combination of **allocentricity and mastery modes**, is

> "conceptually difficult to grasp - it is perhaps the trickiest part of the whole of reversal theory" (Apter, 1989).

To use this combination when we interact with our students is to center on the student(allocentricity); our pleasure comes from altruistic **giving**. For example, the student is **being given time**, e.g., we do not rush the student with "What is the point?" or "I don't see the connection." Instead, we focus on **giving** time, and thus **giving** the student a lengthened opportunity to gain mastery. Because once in this **"given"** mastery mode, the student is encouraged(at the least, to have that lengthened opportunity to be empowered) to clarify and interprete their self-cues. This manner of **giving** social perception **makes a difference** in the student's learning environment. Last but not least, because our unique human ability to experience vicariously, we thus experience mastery that stems from empathizing with the student's mastery.

Please practise the combination of **allocentricity and mastery** and be generous in giving time to listen. For **listening is loving**. Let us always teach "love."

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